Country Sections

France

Handbook Update CLR II

Support service for citizens led renovation projects - ENER/2023/OP/0036

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY

Directorate B – Just Transition, Consumers, Energy Efficiency and Innovation Unit B1 - Consumers, Local Initiatives, Just Transition

Submitted by: Ricardo

In collaboration with: Eworx, Goparity, Steinbeis, Th!nk E, Th!nk Europe, VITO

Date: 26/03/2026

Contents

Introduction 3

Energy Communities in France 4

Country specific information on energy communities 5

Relevant legislation 6

Renovation-related legislation 6

Legislation on engagement of neighbours and volunteers in the renovation 6

Funding bodies and schemes 8

Funding bodies in France 8

Funding schemes in France 8

Special grants for vulnerable households 8

Useful tools 9

Introduction

France's building stock presents a major opportunity for citizen-led renovation, as many residential and mixed-use buildings pre-date modern energy standards and rely on outdated insulation, heating or ventilation systems. The national framework places building renovation at the heart of the energy transition: the country's 2020 "France relance" plan[1] and its "plan de rénovation énergétique des bâtiments" emphasise low-carbon buildings, and the 2021-236 ordinance of 3 March 2021 [2] introduced a legal definition of energy communities in the French Code de l'Énergie. This framework aligns with the EU Clean Energy Package and supports the integration of citizen participation into national renovation strategies.

For citizens and housing associations, this means renovation projects are increasingly seen not merely as individual upgrades but as potential community-led initiatives: building envelopes, heat systems, ventilation and renewable generation/consumption can be addressed collectively. This collective approach is particularly relevant for multi-apartment buildings and mixed-use developments. As noted in a recent article: "Energy communities in France are linked through regional networks to foster and facilitate energy projects led by citizens" (AURA-EE, Alter Alsace Energies).[3]

Despite this policy orientation, barriers remain: financial bottlenecks, technical complexity, dispersed ownership of housing blocks, and limited mobilisation of energy-community models for renovation. At the homeowner level, France's major subsidy programme MaPrimeRénov' (for energy renovation) was temporarily suspended in June 2025[4] to review its structure. This pause has increased uncertainty for citizen-led renovation projects, particularly those dependent on national-level grant schemes.

In a citizen-led renovation context, key steps for collectives include: forming a group of owners/residents, commissioning an energy audit and baseline, defining a renovation-plus-community model (shared renewable generation or consumption), securing finance/grants, organising procurement and governance, and monitoring outcomes. The combination of envelope/system renovation and citizen energy (or shared consumption) offers higher value, stronger local engagement and potential social co-benefits. Such approaches can also contribute to addressing energy poverty and improving housing conditions in disadvantaged areas.

[1] Le plan France Relance | La préfecture et les services de l'État en région Normandie – Link

[2] Ordonnance n° 2021-236 du 3 mars 2021 portant transposition de diverses dispositions de la directive (UE) 2018/2001 – Link

[3] Energy communities driving renovation in France - Citizen-led renovation – Link

[4] France's MaPrimeRénov' Scheme Suspended: Impact on Home Renovation Projects – Link

Energy Communities in France

France has made significant legal and regulatory progress in enabling energy-community models, which are increasingly relevant for citizen-led renovation.[5] The Ordonnance n° 2021-236 of 3 March 2021 amended the French Energy Code to recognise renewable energy communities (REC) and citizen energy communities (CEC), aligning with the EU's Renewable Energy Directive and Internal Electricity Market Directive.

Under these rules, an energy community in France must be a legal entity, open and voluntary in participation, primarily oriented towards environmental, social or communal benefit rather than profit.[6] From October 2023 onwards a decree increased the maximum distance between community members (for collective self-consumption) from 2 km to up to 20 km (10 km in peri-urban, 20 km in rural), thus expanding the potential scale of citizen communities.[7] This change significantly broadens the potential membership base for citizen energy communities.

In the renovation domain, energy communities can facilitate shared generation (e.g., rooftop PV), collective self-consumption, storage and building-block upgrades. For example, in Marseille a citizen-led initiative (the "Sirius project")[8] aims for 90 % emission reduction, 80 % heating consumption cut and 20 % increased renewable utilisation, by coupling renovation and energy-community approaches.[9] Similar pilot projects are emerging in other regions, though most remain at an experimental or early deployment stage.

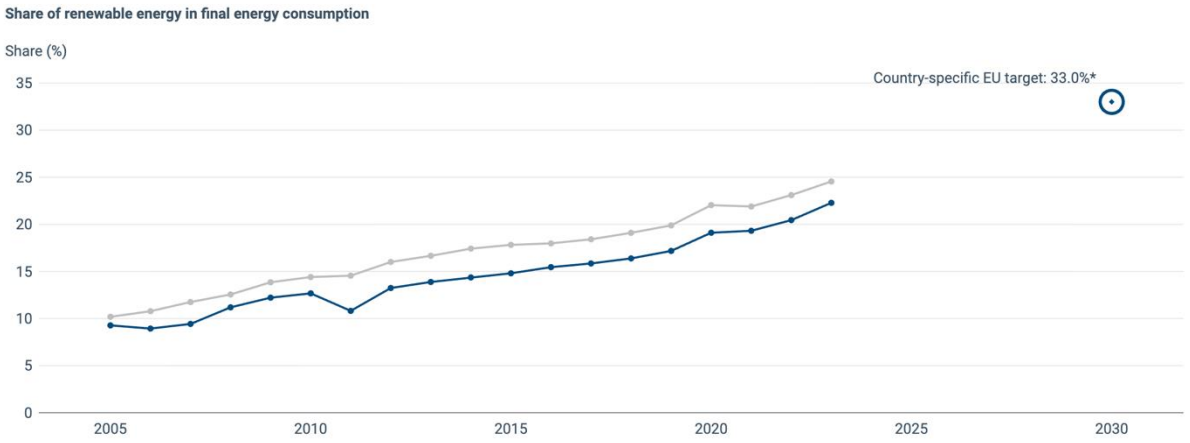

Fig. 1 France's share of renewable energy in final energy consumption. Target/objective will not be reached following the historical trend[10]

Thus, citizen-led renovation in France increasingly intersects with energy communities: groups of owners/residents not only upgrade their buildings but also organise generation/consumption governance and local participation. For such projects to succeed, they must navigate legal registration of the community entity, meet proximity and governance rules, align with funding schemes and

[5] Energy communities, energy cooperatives, energy clusters | Clean energy for EU islands – Link
[6] Energy Communities in France and Norway – Link
[7] France expands limits of 'energy communities' – pv magazine International – Link
[8] Fostering Energy Communities in Marseille, France | EU Covenant of Mayors – Link
[9] Fostering energy communities: the case of Marseille | BUILD UP – Link
[10] Share of renewable energy in final energy consumption | France | Europe's environment 2025 (EEA) – Link

integrate with renovation planning. Early coordination between renovation planning and energy-community governance is critical to avoid delays and cost overruns.

Country specific information on energy communities

In France energy communities may take various legal forms (association, cooperative company, simplified joint-stock company) provided they meet the definition in Article L. 292-1 of the Energy Code. These requirements apply irrespective of whether the community is linked to a single building or multiple sites. Minimum membership rules apply (e.g., twenty natural persons or equivalent) for RECs.[11] Governance must ensure voluntary participation, democratic control, local benefit and primarily environmental/social aims.[12]

For citizen-led renovation involving energy communities, practical aspects include metering and contracts for collective self-consumption, internal sharing of electricity or heat, and the building's envelope and systems being suitably upgraded to make generation and consumption efficient.[13] The 2023 decree clarified proximity, internal network and collective self-consumption rules for communities.[14] Compliance with these rules is particularly important when renovation works affect common electrical or thermal infrastructure.

A representative approach might be:

- owners/residents form a community (legal entity) or work via a homeowners' association;
- conduct an energy audit and certification of the building/housing block;
- define a renovation plan (thermal envelope, ventilation/heating, renewables) combined with a community energy scheme (shared rooftop PV, storage, collective consumption);
- apply to funding and subsidies, leveraging energy-community status if applicable;
- implement renovation works, install generation/consumption infrastructure;
- set up governance, monitoring and internal sharing of benefits among members. Regional networks (e.g., AURA-EE's AURACLE network) support collectives with training, legal/technical support and peer exchange.[15]

In practice, these steps may overlap and extend over several years, particularly for large co-ownerships.

Key challenges include aligning multiple owners or residents, securing sufficient funding for combined renovation + generation projects, complex permitting and statutory compliance (especially in historic zones or multi-apartment buildings), and ensuring technical coordination of renovation and energy systems. Effective projects often benefit from external facilitation, strong community mobilisation and one-stop advice frameworks. Local facilitators or project developers often play a key role in bridging technical, legal and social aspects.

[11] Collective and cooperative energy supply systems – Link
[12] Energy Communities in France and Norway – Link
[13] France expands limits of 'energy communities' – pv magazine International – Link
[14] Energy communities, energy cooperatives, energy clusters | Clean energy for EU islands – Link
[15] Energy renovation -Real estate sales: the new energy audit rules | Service Public – Link

Relevant legislation

Renovation-related legislation

- The Energy-Climate Law (Loi n° 2019-1147)[16] and the Climate & Resilience Law (Loi n° 2021-1104)[17] establish long-term renovation targets and ban the rental of the worst-performing dwellings (energy classes G/E) by certain deadlines. These laws establish binding trajectories for reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in buildings.
- The Energy Code (Code de l'Énergie)[18], particularly Articles L. 291-1 and L. 292-1, define energy communities (CEC/REC).
- The Ordonnance n° 2021-236 of 3 March 2021[19] introduced RECs/CECs as legal entities with rights of collective self-consumption.
- The Decree n° 2023-1287 of 26 December 202320 clarifies governance, proximity and internal sharing rules for energy communities.
- The Building Code (Code de la Construction et de l'Habitation, CCH)21 and related decrees set obligations for energy performance (DPE – diagnostic de performance énergétique) and renovation thresholds for rental and sale housing. Compliance with DPE requirements is a prerequisite for accessing most public renovation subsidies.

Legislation on engagement of neighbours and volunteers in the renovation

While France does not have a single comprehensive "neighbour engagement law" for renovation, relevant frameworks include: associations law (loi 1901) 22 for citizen groups, homeowners'-association statutes for co-ownership (copropriété) works, and specific provisions for citizen energy communities (voluntary participation, democratic governance). Energy-community collectives may mobilise volunteers for outreach, technical governance, and member coordination (e.g., supported by regional networks AURACLE or GECLER). Volunteers may support coordination and engagement, but construction and installation works must be carried out by licensed professionals.

Furthermore, facilitating citizen-led community energy initiatives (generation, sharing) interacts with broader legal regimes on energy markets, demand-side flexibility and grid access; groups should ensure compliance, especially when surplus generation or sharing across parties is involved (see demand-side flexibility reforms).[23]

In multi-apartment co-ownership schemes, major renovation decisions (work on common parts) require an assembly of co-owners, votes with defined majorities (often double majority) under the law n° 65-557 of 10 July 1965 (copropriété[24]). Citizen-led renovation that overlaps with energy community generation/consumption must ensure communal decision-making, stakeholder

[16] Law no. 2019-1147 on Energy and the climate - Climate Change Laws of the World – Link
[17] LOI n° 2021-1104 du 22 août 2021 portant lutte contre le dérèglement climatique et renforcement de la résilience face à ses effets (1) - Légifrance – Link
[18] Code de l'énergie - Légifrance – Link
[19] Ordonnance n° 2021-236 du 3 mars 2021 portant transposition de diverses dispositions de la directive (UE) 2018/2001 – Link
[20] Décret n° 2023-1287 du 26 décembre 2023 relatif aux communautés d'énergie - Légifrance – Link
[21] Code de la construction et de l'habitation - Légifrance – Link
[22] Loi du 1er juillet 1901 relative au contrat d'association - Légifrance – Link
[23] Ecosystem for Demand-side Flexibility Revisited: The Danish Solution – Link
[24] Loi n° 65-557 du 10 juillet 1965 fixant le statut de la copropriété des immeubles bâtis - Légifrance – Link

engagement, and transparent governance. Clear communication and early involvement of co-owners are essential for securing the required majorities.

Funding bodies and schemes

Funding bodies in France

Multiple institutions support renovation and citizen-led energy initiatives:

- The national agency Agence nationale de l'habitat (ANAH)[25] administers housing-renovation subsidies including energy renovation for private homes and co-ownerships. ANAH support is often targeted based on income thresholds and housing conditions.
- Energy communities and local support networks (such as Energie Partagée) facilitate group mobilisation, funding access and capacity building.
- Financial actors: For example, The European Investment Bank (EIB) and La Banque Postale signed a €100 million initial tranche of a €300 million package to finance energy-efficient renovation of social housing and public buildings.

Funding schemes in France

- The flagship home-renovation scheme MaPrimeRénov' aims to support energy-renovation of private homes and co-ownerships with grants and other incentives, though it was temporarily paused in June 2025 for review.[26] Revised eligibility rules and funding levels are expected following the 2025 review.
- Collective self-consumption and energy community participation may open access to regional/municipal grants and local "fonds de transition énergétique" or community benefit funds (e.g., RWE community fund in France) enabling citizen-led energy + renovation projects.[27]
- EU-wide initiative: Citizen-led Renovation Initiative supports energy communities in renovation projects via expert enablers in France and other member states.[28]

Special grants for vulnerable households

France prioritises low-income households and disadvantaged co-owners in renovation support programmes. ANAH offers higher subsidies (sometimes full grants) for very low-income households and very poor housing conditions. Citizen-led renovation collectives may explicitly include vulnerable households as part of social-justice criteria in energy-community governance, thereby aligning with national social renovation priorities. These measures support the integration of social objectives into citizen-led renovation and energy-community projects.

[25] Améliorer l'habitat, partout, pour tous | Agence nationale de l'habitat – Link
[26] France's MaPrimeRénov' Scheme Suspended: Impact on Home Renovation Projects – Link
[27] Community benefit funds – Link
[28] New funding opportunity : Call for the selection of service providers for Citizen-led renovation - IEECP – Link

Useful tools

- The official portal France Rénov'[29] provides comprehensive guidance for homeowners on energy renovation: baseline assessment, eligibility, subsidies, and recommended service providers. It functions as a national one-stop-shop for renovation advice.
- Regional networks such as AURACLE (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes)[30] and GECLER (Grand Est[31]) are networks that bring together project leaders, local authorities, institutional stakeholders, and support organizations who wish to share their experiences in setting up renewable energy production projects involving citizens and offer training, peer-networks and legal/technical support for citizen-collectives.
- Technical modelling tools and case studies: The case of Marseille's energy-community "Sirius" project offers concrete lessons for citizen-led renovation + generation integration.[32]
- Legal/regulatory references: The Clean Energy for EU Islands portal summarises the French community energy framework (Ordonnance 2021-236, Decree 2023-1287).

These tools enable citizen groups to carry out baseline analysis, structure renovation and community energy plans, navigate funding/grants, organise community governance and monitor outcomes.

[29] Le service public de rénovation de l'habitat | France Rénov' – Link

[30] auvergnerhonealpes-ee.fr/agir/thematiques/projets-participatifs-et-citoyens/auracle – Link

[31] GECLER – Link

[32] Fostering Energy Communities in Marseille, France | EU Covenant of Mayors – Link